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INFORMATION

March 17, 1969

STOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Breakfast Plan

At Tab A is a report received yesterday concerning the diversion of a Soviet ship from Haiphong Harbor.

At Tab B is an analysis I had made of the status of Soviet ships in Haiphong Harbor as a result of the report at Tab A.

At Tab C is a copy of a message sent last night through back channels to General Abrams for Ambassador Bunker.

At Tab D is a press guidance worked out yesterday afternoon in conjunction with the Breakfast Plan.

A + B are together in 1 file.

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DOS, ARMY reviews completed.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Typed by: S Dehler

TS-HK, 73

Press Guidance in Conjunction with Implementation
of Breakfast Plan and Allied Attacks by Fire in DMZ

In conjunction with implementation of the Breakfast Plan on March 18 and concurrent military operations in northern and southern portions of the DMZ, the following press guidance will be strictly adhered to.

Part I covers DMZ attacks and Part II the Breakfast Plan.

Part I

1. There will be absolutely no reference to strikes provided for in the Breakfast Plan.
2. Announcement will be made on March 18 in Saigon along the following lines: "U.S. forces are attacking enemy troop concentrations and supply caches in the northern and southern portions of the DMZ today (Tuesday, March 18) through combined B-52 and tactical air strikes, as well as, artillery and naval bombardment. This action was undertaken in view of continuing violations in the de-militarized zone by North Vietnamese forces which are threatening U.S. and allied positions in the I Corps Tactical Zone." If the press asks whether these attacks are the "appropriate response" mentioned by the President, spokesmen will state the press can draw its own conclusion.

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2. In addition to the basic press coverage, the Department of Defense should prepare press backgrounders to be given both in Saigon and Washington which outline in detail the nature of the recent abuses of the DMZ by North Vietnam forces as well as a list of the Saigon and Hue shellings. Backgrounders are to be prepared and available at the time of the release of Tuesday, March 18 announcing the attacks.

Part II
Breakfast Plan

1. In conjunction with the routine release made by MACV covering B-52 operations in South Vietnam on March 18, MACV spokesman will issue a statement along the lines of the attached draft.

2. In the event press inquiries are received following the execution of the Breakfast Plan as to whether or not U.S. B-52's have struck in Cambodia, U.S. spokesman will confirm that B-52's did strike on routine missions adjacent to the Cambodian border but state that he has no details and will look into this question.

3. Should the press persist in its inquiries or in the event of a Cambodian protest concerning the possibility of U.S. strikes in Cambodia, U.S. spokesman will neither confirm nor deny reports of

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attacks on Cambodia but state this is under investigation. With respect to any attacks against Cambodia, we would take the same public position of "no comment" as in the case of bombing attacks on Laos with the additional statement that reports of such attacks are under investigation.

4. After delivering a reply to any Cambodian protest, we will inform the press that we have apologized and offered compensation.

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Draft Press Announcement for MACV Spokesman

B-52 missions in 6 strikes early this morning bombed these targets:

"Enemy activity base camps and bunker and tunnel complexes 45 kilometers northeast of Tay Ninh city; Enemy troop concentrations and supply caches in the DMZ."

Sihanouk on Cambodian Border Incidents

Sihanouk's Recent Actions

In recent months, Prince Sihanouk has modified his position on border incidents and on NVN/VC use of Cambodian territory as a sanctuary. The modified Sihanouk position has been indicated by the following steps, principally:

1. A more moderate reaction to recent border incidents, with the protests taking a pro-forma character even when Cambodian lives were lost.

2. The relatively early release of four American pilots recently.

3. Increasingly forthright public statements on Viet Cong and Viet Minh infiltration, particularly in his March 6 press conference when he flashed, but did not show, a map of Communist concentrations in Cambodia.

4. Public and private recognition that incidents will occur along the border but inferring the U.S. should attack the Communists in non-populated areas.

-- The Australian Ambassador reported Sihanouk as stating privately: "As for frontier incidents, he was fully aware that so long as fighting went on in Vietnam, and so close to the border, it would not be possible to prevent such incidents completely or the loss of life on the Cambodian side that they involved. But as things stood at the moment, Cambodia could not even get compensation."

-- In his March 6 press conference, Sihanouk said: "I told Mr. (name indistinct) that there are Vietnamese infiltrating Cambodia. I am deeply worried about it, but the Americans have never bombed them. Instead, they bomb only the areas where there are, so to speak, neither isolated Vietnamese nor Vietnamese units which have infiltrated."

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"Dear friends, do you realize the importance of what I have said? This is very important to international opinion. This means that people will ask whether there are Viet Cong and Viet Minh infiltrating the country of the Prince. Yes, there are. But the Americans have not bombed the areas where there are Viet Cong and Viet Minh; they bomb only the areas where there are Cambodians."

5. A receptivity to an early resumption of relations with us, despite recent incidents.

Nevertheless, Sihanouk has made it clear that he cannot publicly condone these incidents and that he must protest them and seek compensation in order to preserve his neutrality.

Implications of Sihanouk's Actions

Sihanouk is genuinely concerned by Communist infiltration through his territory and use of it as a sanctuary. He recognizes that there is little he can do militarily to stop it and is apparently not adverse to very limited actions against the Communists in Cambodia. On the other hand, to condone publicly U.S. action would vitiate his neutral stance and invite even more serious difficulties for him with the Communists.

Sihanouk, therefore, appears to be seeking a set of tacit ground rules which preserve his neutrality and yet allow for an occasional incident inside Cambodian territory. In this, he may be moving toward a position somewhat analogous to Laos' Souvanna Phouma, who permits us to bomb the Communists, acknowledges the attacks privately, but insists that we not publicly state that we are taking these actions.

From what Sihanouk has indicated, the following ground rules may be inferred:

1. Very occasional U.S. attacks just inside the Cambodian border are anticipated, but should be kept to an absolute minimum

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2. The U.S. attacks should be in non-populated areas, particularly the tri-border area. Such attacks will not be in the presence of Cambodians or result in Cambodian casualties, and thus less likely to embarrass Sihanouk. In these circumstances, protests by Hanoi are more difficult since they would only acknowledge its use of Cambodian territory.

3. The U.S. should not publicly state that incidents inside Cambodia are deliberate since this would put Sihanouk on the spot. Rather, they should be characterized ambiguously, with a public "no comment" investigation, and an apology and compensation for an implied mistake.

4. Cambodia reserves the right to protest and seek compensation and to take other public steps to demonstrate its indignation and ergo its neutrality.

It is quite likely that such ground rules may never be more than tacit. A key, however, for Sihanouk will always be the public face given to border incidents.

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Tab D

Press Guidance

1. In conjunction with the routine release made by MACV covering B-52 operations in South Vietnam on March 18, MACV spokesman will issue a statement along the following lines: "B-52 missions in 6 strikes early this morning bombed these targets: 'Enemy activity, base camps and bunker and tunnel complexes 45 kilometers northeast of Tay Ninh city. (List two or more other B-52 targets struck as above)' "
2. In the event press inquiries are received following the execution of the Breakfast Plan as to whether or not U.S. B-52's have struck in Cambodia, U.S. spokesman will confirm that B-52's did strike on routine missions adjacent to the Cambodian border but state that he has no details and will look into this question.
3. Should the press persist in its inquiries or in the event of a Cambodian protest concerning U.S. strikes in Cambodia, U.S. spokesman will neither confirm nor deny reports of attacks on Cambodia but state this will be investigated.
4. After delivering a reply to any Cambodian protest, Washington will inform the press that we have apologized and offered compensation.